

Ag in Action



April 2007

Ag in Action is Back!

After a hiatus "Ag in Action" is back to give you a monthly update on what is happening at the Arizona Department of Agriculture.

If you have pictures or information about the great things the ADA is doing please e-mail your suggestions for next months edition to hermes@azda.gov.

From the Director's Desk

As the temperatures heat up this spring so does the debate over the budget at the State Legislature. Over the past five years the Department has seen budget cuts and no new General Fund money, but this year I am confident that this trend will be reversed. Our need for new general fund money is very real and no where is this more apparent than at our ports of entry.

The ports of entry are critical in keeping pests that could destroy Arizona plants out of the state and ensuring that food brought into Arizona is safe and meets State and Federal standards. Due to previous year budget cuts, the ports of entry are no longer the robust "first line of defense" for the state's \$9.2 billion agricultural base that they once were. Currently, only two of the four ports on major interstates are staffed to conduct round the clock inspections of food products, livestock and landscape plants.

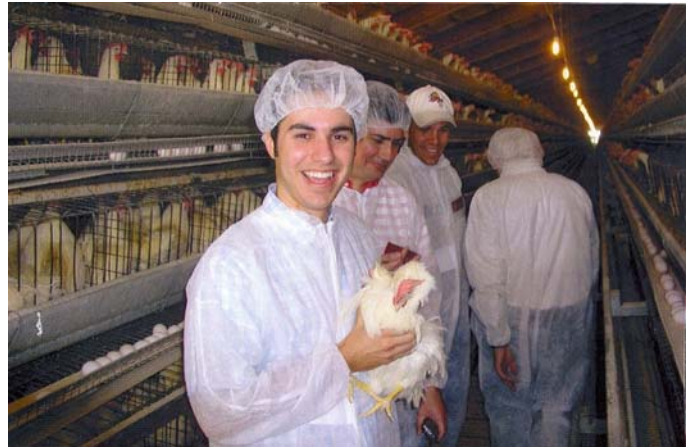
Many truck drivers carrying agricultural products into our state know that our ports have limited hours of operation now. These trucks will wait until inspections close to drive through the port, their cargo coming into Arizona without any inspection.

We are requesting the state legislature provide an increase of \$851,300 annually to provide the 20.5

new employees needed to strengthen our port inspections and extend their hours of operation. This will allow the Ehrenberg, Yuma, and Sanders ports to increase their hours of operation and better protect Arizona's food supply and Agriculture industry.

This funding is especially needed in light of recent threats of the Glassy Winged Sharp Shooter and Mexican Fruit Fly coming in from California, and other plant and animal pests and diseases which could potentially be devastating to sectors of Arizona's agricultural industry. I am hopeful that you will join us in stressing to the legislature the importance of stopping pests and disease at the border before they have the opportunity to devastate important sectors of Arizona's agricultural industry.

Hello from the P.I.O.



New PIO/Legislative Liaison Ed Hermes with Reps. David Lujan and Ed Ableser on a tour of Hickman's Egg Ranch.

For the past two months I have had the privilege to be the Legislative Liaison and Public Information Officer for the Arizona Department of Agriculture. During my first day on the job, I dealt with the media blitz the morning after freezing temperatures

adversely affected our citrus and other crops and there has not been a dull moment since.

I come to the Department most recently from serving on the Arizona Board of Regents where I represented and made policy decisions for our three state universities. Before this I worked at in the Governor's Office in the legislative affairs division. I received my degree in History and Political Science with an emphasis in Public Policy Advocacy from Arizona State University. Before moving to Arizona I grew up on a hog farm in northwest Illinois where my family has been farming for over a century.

Since coming to the Department in January I have had the opportunity to work on many legislative issues, write press releases and conduct interviews with media, take legislators on a tour of Hickman's Egg Ranch, visit many of our important agricultural sites in the state, and work with the great staff here are the ADA.

Thank you to everyone who has helped get me situated and if there is ever a legislative or media issue that I can be of service on please do not hesitate to call me at 602-542-0958.

Livestock and Crop Conservation Grant Program

Karol Brill, LCCGP coordinator



From left to right: Karol Brill (LCCGP coordinator), Andrea Martin (Air Quality Program Manager), and Elizabeth Mower (ACT Intern)

The application period for the 2007 cycle of the Livestock and Crop Conservation Grant Program has come to a close. This is the second cycle of the

LCCGP that has been run since the program was moved to the Arizona Department of Agriculture in 2003.

The purpose of the LCCGP is to preserve open space. Eligible applicants include individual land owners and agricultural lessees of State or Federal land. There is \$4 million available for grants in the 2007 cycle. Grant funds may be used for projects on private, State and Federal land. Grant funds may also be used as matching funds to other conservation grant programs, including NRCS EQIP and WHIP programs.

The LCCGP ran a very successful grant cycle in 2005, awarding more than \$3.4 million to 56 producers to do conservation based projects on their operations. Projects included extending fence lines and pipelines, installing wells, grassland restoration and erosion control.

Statistics from the 2005 cycle:

- 56 grants awarded (80 applicants submitted 101 applications)
- Total request for grant funds was over \$10.4 million
- Total funds awarded: \$3,403,064.20
- Total matching funds leveraged by LCCGP funding: \$3.62 million, which includes \$1.78 million in state funds and \$1.63 million in federal funds
- Average grant award was \$60,769
- Many projects span multiple years (ranging 1-5 years)

Southwest Ag Summit **Andrea Martin**



From left to right: Andrea Martin, Jennifer Weber, Tiffany Ground, and Lisa James show off the great work ADA is doing at the Southwest Agriculture Summit.

SOUTHWEST AG SUMMIT, YUMA: 3/07/2007
 Director Butler welcomed the approximately 400 attendees to the inaugural Southwest Ag Summit. Sponsors for the SW Ag Summit were the Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association, and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. The Summit was held at the Yuma Civic Center where the Arizona Department of Agriculture, Agriculture, Consultation and Training (ACT) program and Citrus, Fruits, and Vegetable Standardization shared a trade show booth in the hall, with other agricultural related vendors.

Dr. Jim Gorny, the senior vice-president of food and safety for the United Fresh Produce Association in Washington, DC, was the morning keynote speaker. The focus of his speech was the standardization of food safety measures. The afternoon keynote speaker was James G. Watt, a former Department of the Interior Secretary under President Ronald Reagan. He presented a lighthearted view, using the former Presidents to show the importance of character. Breakout forums throughout the day were focused on food safety, immigration reform, advancement in agricultural production, crop protection, and innovations in agricultural machinery.



ADA booth at the Southwest Ag Summit

Hats Off to You!

Director Butler and Governor's Policy Advisor for Agriculture, Lori Faeth, received the "Industry Appreciation Award" at the Arizona Cotton Growers 63rd Annual Meeting in Casa Grande on March 7, 2007.

Letter to the Editor:

Arizona Agriculture and Renewable Energy: A Match Made On Earth

By Julie Murphree, Director of Public Relations for Arizona Farm Bureau

Renewable energy and greater energy efficiency is on everyone's mind. And when you look at the diversity of the renewable energy portfolio that includes solar, wind, biomass, biogas, biofuel and geothermal you discover that Arizona agriculture has a key stake in the state's efforts to increase its use of renewable energy.

According to Commissioner Kristin K. Mayes of the Arizona Corporation Commission, vast opportunities abound for Arizona farmers and ranchers. "Agriculture can take advantage of geothermal resources in southeastern Arizona and wind in northern Arizona. Additionally, the Commission includes biogas electricity generators as eligible renewable technology, which presents dairies and farmers with opportunities to produce electricity and sell it to utilities."

And don't rule out algae. Researchers from both Arizona State University and the University of Arizona are investigating the viability of commercial-scale microalgae production farms (more on this can be found at www.azfb.org). Say

professors doing research at ASU's Polytechnic Campus, "A new generation of bio-farming has a chance to emerge in the next few years in this state."

To date, the clearest and fastest revenue-generating renewable energy opportunity will come from Arizona's first ethanol plant based in Maricopa, Arizona. Just months away from its grand opening, Pinal Energy will annually produce 55 million gallons of ethanol from roughly 18 million bushels of corn and milo and annually generate \$110 million in revenue.

A more self-contained ethanol plant will come on line only a year later. More accurately identified as a biorefinery, XL Dairy Group plans to open a 50-million-gallon-per-year ethanol biorefinery by the summer of 2008. Located in Vicksburg, Arizona, it will include a 7,500-cow dairy, a corn fractionation mill and a 5-million-gallon-per-year biodiesel plant and a waste-to-energy conversion plant. The waste-to-energy plant will provide power, heat and steam energy for the project from cow manure. By integrating these operations, the biorefinery will have the opportunity to operate without the use of fossil fuels.

Arizona Farm Bureau has recently completed an in-depth investigation of agriculture-centered renewable energy opportunities in its April 2007 issue of *Arizona Agriculture*, a members-only publication. Ongoing information on this issue will be made available on www.azfb.org.



Hires and Retires

Elaine Tigue

Elaine has announced her retirement effective March 31. Elaine has served as the Brands Clerk for several years and has been in state service for 12 years. During that time, Elaine has served with distinction by providing excellent customer service to everyone in the Brands community. Elaine constantly received rave reviews and praise from the

customer comment cards distributed by the section. Elaine was always the first to volunteer to help anyone that needed help and trained all our new employees on the equine ownership process. She will be sorely missed by the Licensing Section. Suzette Taylor will assume the responsibilities of the Brand program.

Eric Williams

New Programmer

Elizabeth Mower

ACT Intern

March / April Birthdays



Krysti Gingrass	3/27
James Legg	3/27
Carol Chancey	3/28
John Hunt	3/28
Maria Lopez	3/28
James Turner	3/28
Vernita Sunn	3/30
Georgia Mundall	3/31
James Wilkerson	4/1
Cody McGuire	4/3
Fariborz Sepharom	4/3
Walter Strain	4/5
Flora Ferrington	4/6
James Lytle	4/7
Rachel Paul	4/7
Randall Colley	4/9
Marilyn Lutz	4/9
Donald Drake	4/10
Larry Stanford	4/10
Glenn Badinelli	4/12
Gerald Reiffenberger	4/13
Gabriel Castro	4/14
Howard Simms	4/15